

Greening: An Analysis of four Canadian Newspapers

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Introduction

- Greening is understood as the action of making something more environmentally friendly
- Greening can be considered a method of climate change adaptation
- The media can influence the way a person will act by producing a certain attitude towards a topic. Media representation of current issues which concern the public plays a large role in the public's perception of these issues

Purpose/Objective

- Media is a large and extremely influential institution; an analysis of the content and the content presentation (i.e. tone, bias, etc.) can reveal underlying reasons for the discourse which is occurring in the public sector
- Media representation of greening greatly influences public perception and can have an extensive impact on the current greening practices in Canada today, and in the future
- We believe that the content analysis of Canadian newspaper articles covering greening will shed light on the information readers are exposed to which in turn can be seen as one aspect that influences reader's views and actions

Method

- The newspapers were chosen based on region, using two national Canadian newspapers –Globe and Mail (n=13) and National Post (n=28)– and two regional newspapers –Calgary Herald (n=26) and Edmonton Journal (n=26)– searching from 1990–2012. We accessed the newspapers through the Canadian newsstand database we accessed through the University of Calgary
- Keyword combination: Greening AND [one of the four newspapers] AND [either Oil, Gas, Hydrocarbon, Energy, Coal, Fossil fuel] (Table 1)
- Relevant articles were analyzed for content, using an initial list of codes, and adding to the list as other topics appeared in the articles. The codes were used to develop the themes which arose in each article.

Table 1: Results from the Canadian Newsstand Proquest search for articles related to greening in the *Globe and Mail*, the *National Post*, the *Calgary Herald*, and the *Edmonton Journal*; shown as n(rounded%)

Greening AND...	National Post (Canada) n=28	Globe and Mail n=13	Calgary Herald n=26	Edmonton Journal n=26
Oil	5 (17)	6 (46)	6 (23)	6 (23)
Gas	14 (50)	5 (38)	4 (15)	4 (15)
Hydrocarbon	0	0	0	0
Energy	17 (61)	6 (46)	13 (50)	14 (54)
Coal	1 (3)	1 (8)	2 (8)	0
Fossil fuel	1 (3)	2 (15)	0	2 (8)

Table 2: All Greening Articles Code Frequency; shown as n (rounded %)

Code	National Post n=28	Globe and Mail n=13	Edmonton Journal n=26	Calgary Herald N=26
Solution(s)	22 (79)	10 (77)	25 (96)	26 (100)
Solutions to Problems	16 (57)	7 (54)	17 (65)	16 (62)
Problem(s)	25 (89)	12 (92)	20 (77)	22 (85)
Consequences	4 (14)	2 (15)	7 (27)	3 (12)
Benefit(s)	15 (54)	7 (54)	10 (38)	10 (38)
Source Written by journalist	24 (86)	10 (77)	17 (65)	18 (69)
Source Editorial	1 (4)	1 (8)	4 (15)	4 (15)
Source Narrative	0	0	1 (4)	0
Source Letter to the Editor	1 (4)	2 (15)	1 (4)	1 (4)
Company	20 (71)	8 (62)	17 (65)	22 (85)
Person	27 (96)	11 (85)	18 (69)	23 (88)
Place	23 (82)	11 (85)	20 (77)	19 (73)
Date	8 (29)	7 (54)	7 (27)	11 (42)
Data	28 (100)	13 (100)	26 (100)	25 (96)
Financial Data	9 (32)	3 (23)	7 (27)	11 (42)
Action(s)	24 (86)	11 (85)	22 (85)	22 (85)
Action needed	11 (39)	9 (69)	15 (58)	13 (50)
Product Green energy	2 (7)	0	6 (23)	7 (27)
Product Oil	4 (14)	1 (8)	5 (19)	3 (12)
Product Oil sands	3 (11)	1 (8)	4 (15)	2 (8)
Product Gas	2 (7)	2 (15)	2 (8)	3 (12)
Product Electricity	0	0	0	3 (12)
Product Hydrocarbon	0	0	1 (4)	1 (4)
Technology	15 (54)	5 (38)	14 (54)	21 (81)
Leadership	13 (46)	7 (54)	17 (65)	11 (42)
Sustainability	23 (82)	12 (92)	24 (92)	20 (77)
Demands	7 (25)	4 (31)	6 (23)	8 (31)
Competition	7 (25)	5 (38)	6 (23)	6 (23)
Opinion	13 (46)	8 (62)	11 (42)	4 (15)

Table 3: Results from the Canadian Newsstand Proquest search for articles discussing *greenwashing* in the *Globe and Mail*, the *National Post*, the *Calgary Herald*, and the *Edmonton Journal*; shown as n(rounded%)

Greenwash AND...	National Post	Globe and Mail	Calgary Herald	Edmonton Journal
	4	9	9	3

Table 4: All *Greenwash* Articles Code Frequency; shown as n (rounded %)

Code	National Post n=4	Globe and Mail n=9	Calgary Herald n=9	Edmonton Journal n=3
Solution(s)	2(50)	4(44)	6(67)	1(33)
Solutions to Problems	2(50)	0	0	0
Problem(s)	4(100)	8(89)	9(100)	1(33)
Consequences	1(25)	0	2(22)	0
Source Written by journalist	4(100)	7(78)	9(100)	1(33)
Source Editorial	0	0	0	1(33)
Source Letter to the Editor	0	2(22)	0	1(33)
Company	4(100)	6(67)	7(78)	2(66)
Person	2(50)	6(67)	8(89)	2(66)
Place	1(25)	5(56)	7(78)	2(66)
Data	2(50)	0	5(56)	0
Action(s)	1(25)	2(22)	5(56)	1(33)
Action needed	0	1(11)	3(33)	0
Product Green energy	0	1(11)	0	0
Product Oil	0	0	3(33)	0
Product Oil sands	0	0	2(22)	0
Product Gas	0	1(11)	3(33)	0
Product Electricity	0	1(11)	0	0
Product Hydrocarbon	0	0	2(22)	0
Leadership	1(25)	1(11)	0	0
Sustainability	1(25)	1(11)	0	0
Demands	2(50)	1(11)	1(11)	0
Competition	0	0	2(22)	1(33)
Opinion	1(25)	3(33)	3(33)	2(66)

Results

Throughout the newspapers:

- Frequent discussion regarding the economics benefits of going green (Table 2, 'Benefit(s)' code)
- Employment is also a crucial factor
- Discussion of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydro
- Carbon capture and storage is dubbed "the holy grail of environmental progress in the oil and gas industry" (1)
- Common discussion on government action in enforcing green practice and the current lack of action from the government (Table 2, 'Action needed' code)
- Greening of oil extraction and use of natural gas is positive; most of the articles on oil and gas were in the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* (Table 1)
- Greenwashing is discussed in multiple articles in each newspaper (Table 3)

Canada

The *Globe and Mail* presents perspectives on the government's involvement in greening, and the need for increased involvement



Articles in the *National Post* focus on the economics of greening



Both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* discuss current greening practices and successful individuals and businesses

References

(1) Sankey, D. (2007). Workers cash in on greening of the oilsands; Tech skills in demand, *National Post*, p. WK.5. Retrieved from <http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/world/story.html?id=461e3253-138a-4a9f-9c92-bbca21639008>

Discussion

The portrayal of greening in the media is crucial for considering ways in which the public may consider, think of, and act on greening.

Although it is impossible to conclude whether or not these perceptions are more likely to encourage Canadians to go green, based on the positive examples of greening practices and the encouraging message that going green can be profitable, it is likely that Canada will see a change for the greener.

Greenwashing is a marketing technique which makes a product appear to be environmentally friendly, even though it is not; it is intended to be misleading. Throughout the articles there is a demand for a universal standard to provide clear information to the public. This transparency is necessary in order to create a barrier to greenwashing.

A possible solution to greenwashing is to utilize the media as an educational device to inform the public on how to recognize the difference between a green or greenwashed product. Journalists can gather advice from experts and relay this information to the public.

Conclusion

Adapting to climate change means we must change our thoughts and our actions. The greening of consumer goods and services is one way in which we can mitigate climate change. Choosing to use environmentally friendly products and act sustainably requires a change in attitude; citizens must adapt a new lifestyle in order to contribute to climate change mitigation measures. This can start with encouragement from the media.